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United Nations Development
Programme and of the
United Nations Population Fund**

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Organizational matters

**Report of the second regular session 2007
(10 to 14 September and 5 October 2007, New York)**

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I. Organizational matters

1. The second regular session 2007 of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA met from 10 to 14 September and on 5 October in New York. The Executive Board approved the agenda and work plan for its second regular session 2007 (DP/2007/L.3) and the report of the annual session 2007 (DP/2007/39).

2. The Executive Board agreed to the following schedule of sessions of the Executive Board in 2008:

First regular session 2008:	21 to 24 January 2008
Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP:	25 and 28 January 2008
Annual session 2008:	16 to 27 June 2008 (Geneva)
Second regular session 2008:	8 to 12 September 2008

3. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the annual session 2007 were included in document DP/2007/44 accessible at www.undp.org/execbrd.

Administrator's statement

4. In his address to the Executive Board, the Administrator reflected on recent challenges in the global economic environment. Citing the turmoil in financial markets as an example of the world's growing economic interdependence, often with severe and immediate impact on the most vulnerable states, he underscored the need for inclusive growth — a driving principle of the proposed UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011. He stressed the importance of a systematic analysis of resource deployment and of results-based management and interventions. In that context, he observed:

(a) *A marked increase in external and internal assessments of UNDP performance*, with more independent evaluations and stronger accountability and transparency controls contemplated in the strategic plan;

(b) *The establishment of concrete indicators* to measure UNDP contributions to development results, notably in the areas of United Nations coordination, management, South-South cooperation and other cross-cutting issues as a basis for assessing institutional performance;

(c) *Strengthened commitment to national ownership* of the development agenda, using a "market test" of demand for UNDP services to help measure its effectiveness; and

(d) *The UNDP policy* "that equality of rights for all is the indispensable foundation on which human development must be built".

5. He outlined the findings of a preliminary report of an external audit of past UNDP operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, adding that new allegations of funding diversion and whistleblower retaliation have prompted management to commission a complementary external review of issues beyond the mandate and terms of reference of the external auditors. He stressed the importance of due process in investigations, taking note of existing mechanisms such as the

Office of the Ombudsman and policies to protect whistleblowers and to guard against harassment and abuse of authority.

6. In anticipation of the high-level initiative on climate change of the Secretary-General, he noted the growing impact of climate change on human development. Among the elements of a scaled-up UNDP response to climate change, he highlighted the forthcoming Human Development Report and a number of partnerships with other United Nations bodies and with the private sector.

7. On the matter of United Nations coherence, he acknowledged the ongoing challenges in maintaining a delineation between the dual roles of UNDP as operational agency and manager of the resident coordinator system. He cited examples of harmonization and closer collaboration with United Nations colleagues, and noted that the strategic plan is anchored in the needs and demands of programme countries, guided by the parameters set out in the triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPR). Within those parameters, UNDP seeks to respond effectively to growing demand for greater effectiveness of the United Nations system, enhanced national ownership, greater country-level simplification and harmonization, and clearer delineation of functions.

8. Since the Administrator's statement was followed immediately by the Associate Administrator's introduction to the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011, most comments by delegations were made subsequent to that presentation. However, the interventions, including those referred to in this paragraph, also related to the Administrator's statement. Delegations welcomed the Administrator's emphasis on growth and national ownership as well as the strengthened focus on transparency, performance assessment and managing for development results. They reaffirmed the critical role of UNDP in assisting countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and called on Member States to cooperate in allowing this important work to progress. While reserving more specific comments for the deliberation of the draft strategic plan, some delegations nonetheless observed that parts of the Administrator's statement seemed at odds with the core functions of UNDP and with the potential impact of the plan.

9. Some delegations expressed concern over the handling of allegations related to operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, contending that the approach contradicts the UNDP principles of transparency and of equal relations with all states.

10. In response, the Administrator reaffirmed management's commitment to transparency at all levels of UNDP, referring once more to the range of measures currently in place to that end.

UNDP segment

II. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

11. The Associate Administrator presented the annual review of the financial situation, 2006 (DP/2007/41 and Add.1), information on United Nations technical cooperation expenditures, 2006 (DP 2007/42 and Add.1), and a preliminary draft of the biennial support budget in a results-based format.

12. Noting that the ratio between regular and other resources currently stands at 1:4, he reiterated the need to achieve a ratio of 1:3 by the end of the cycle, a target he felt attainable with support from Member States and commitment to predictable, timely funding. He noted a small (0.3 per cent) increase in technical cooperation expenditure. There was a major shift in the distribution of expenditure deriving from regular and extra-budgetary resources dedicated to technical cooperation. UNDP continues its overall upward trend in total programme delivery.

13. The Associate Administrator introduced the draft biennial support budget, which organizes proposed management results for 2008-2009 around 18 functions. He pointed out that, in contrast to previous input-based budgets, measuring management results at a functional level responds to the call for greater oversight and auditing functions.

14. The Executive Board adopted decision 2007/31 on the annual review of the financial situation, 2006 (UNDP) and the multi-year funding framework cumulative report on UNDP performance and results for 2004-2006. The Executive Board took note of the report on the information on United Nations system technical cooperation expenditures 2006.

III. UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011

15. The Associate Administrator presented the draft strategic plan, 2008-2011, noting that its improvements on the current multi-year funding framework are driven by country demand and comparative advantage. He spoke of the paradox of maintaining a corporate sense of purpose in a decentralized organization such as UNDP, while at the same time needing to tailor approaches and expectations to country-level contexts. The results frameworks of the strategic plan, he noted, aim to strike the necessary balance between flexibility and accountability.

16. He asserted that the four development focus areas — poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development — represent a natural evolution in the work of UNDP, with the overarching goal of developing country-level capacity to achieve the Goals.

17. Among the essential conditions for UNDP success, he underscored the following: a need to account for value created with taxpayers' money; a dynamic learning environment that captures and applies lessons; a world-standard ethical culture impermeable to fraud or corruption; strong investment in human resources; an emphasis on staff safety and security; and organization of UNDP and the wider United Nations system around the Millennium Development Goals.

18. In addition to highlighting prescriptions for strengthening accountability and results-based management, he stressed that the strategic plan is a living document that will benefit from a dynamic process of consultation and collaboration.

19. Delegations commended the efforts of UNDP to make the strategic plan responsive to the needs and concerns of Member States. Acknowledging the unprecedented number of informal consultations on the strategic plan, they expressed appreciation for the ongoing commitment to refining the draft. Many noted with approval the stronger orientation toward measurable results and the cross-cutting integration of gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as

the emphasis on national ownership, South-South cooperation, capacity development and a demand-driven approach. Many urged a move forward to implementation.

20. At the same time, delegations expressed contrasting assessments of the potential impact of certain elements of the proposed strategic plan. Some felt that certain proposals tended to impose conditionalities, undermine national sovereignty and cause UNDP to deviate from its core development mandate, as well as pre-empt the outcome of General Assembly negotiations and the TCPR. Others expressed regret at a perceived dilution of the human rights-based approach and called for greater precision in delineating United Nations coordination functions, underscoring the importance of a clear division between these and the operations of UNDP itself. Several delegations asked for further elaboration on the concept of a UNDP accountability framework. Although many delegations welcomed the emphasis on South-South cooperation as central to capacity development, some felt the draft strategic plan presented it as a modality rather than as a driving principle.

21. After exhaustive consultations on this agenda item, the President convened an extraordinary sixth day of deliberations, at which he presented a draft decision on the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011.

22. In remarks on behalf of the Administrator, who was attending to previously scheduled commitments abroad, the Associate Administrator stated that a rather big challenge during the session had been towards reaching an agreement on the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011. He thanked Board Members for the tremendous efforts they had made to achieve a consensus on the plan. He acknowledged that not all delegations were fully pleased with every part of the decision, adding that UNDP needed to recognize this and be sensitive to the full range of issues and concerns expressed. He assured the Board that UNDP would follow fully the provisions and guidance contained in their decision, and that all the amendments and adjustments integral to the decision would be fully reflected in the operationalization of the strategic plan. He underscored the commitment of UNDP to ensuring that all guidance provided to country offices would reflect the full provisions of the decision. Finally, he committed to issuing an updated version of the strategic plan, reflecting all the provisions of the decision, prior to the first regular session of the Executive Board in January 2008.

23. Delegations were pleased to have arrived at a consensus on the decision and praised the consultative process. They pledged to cooperate in ongoing efforts to improve the plan. Some took the floor to underscore the crucial role of UNDP in promoting United Nations norms, standards, principles and ideals as prescribed by its mandate. Many stressed the importance of national ownership and respect for sovereignty in development interventions at country level.

24. Some delegations, however, reiterated their contention that a human rights-based approach is not within the UNDP mandate, nor does UNDP have normative, operational or monitoring competence in the area of human rights. Some urged UNDP to base its work on internationally agreed concepts and approaches consistent with the outcomes of United Nations summits and conferences. They reaffirmed the view that development funding should be neutral, grounded in multilateralism and free of conditionalities, reflecting the universal, voluntary and grant nature of United Nations development activities as guided by national priorities. In the spirit of constructive dialogue, some delegations encouraged UNDP to remain sensitive to

divergent viewpoints and cultural differences in ongoing discussions of and improvements to the strategic plan.

25. The Executive Board adopted decision 2007/32 on the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011. Full transcripts of statements delivered upon adoption of the decision are contained in document DP/2008/1/Add.1.

IV. Programming arrangements

26. The Associate Administrator presented proposals on programming arrangements, which included: a systematic adjustment of country classification thresholds at the start of each programming cycle to ensure that they remain constant over time; standardizing the target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) to a 50:50 share between TRAC-1 and TRAC-2, with regional flexibility of up to 10 per cent above regional pro rata shares of total TRAC-1, and without country limitation on TRAC-2 resource assignments; increasing the annual programming base from \$450 million to \$700 million; and adjusting specific fixed lines of the programme financial framework. He also proposed measures intended to strengthen the partnership between UNDP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in areas of decentralization, local governance and microfinance.

27. Delegations were pleased with the move toward results-based budgeting captured in the document, but called for clearer linkages between allocations and development outcomes according to the priorities set forth in the draft strategic plan. Some commended the strengthened partnership with UNCDF, noting that the increasing demand for its services warranted predictable programme financing support. Others encouraged UNDP to adopt a gradual approach to classification adjustments, to minimize any adverse impact on ongoing programmes as well as to maintain funding thresholds within TRAC that would sustain a minimum presence in middle-income countries.

28. Delegations also welcomed the introduction of a fixed line for gender mainstreaming, hailing its potential for closer monitoring of gender-related spending over time.

29. The Associate Administrator emphasized in response that allocations and cost classifications would proceed according to country programme demand and remain subject to review, with necessary adjustments after the new biennium. He took note of the comment regarding minimum funding thresholds in middle-income countries.

30. The Executive Board adopted decision 2007/33 on proposals for programming arrangements for 2008-2011.

V. United Nations Development Fund for Women

31. The Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), presented the UNIFEM strategic plan, 2008-2011. Asserting the centrality of women's empowerment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, she noted that the plan aims to deepen support through catalytic programming with a guiding framework of national ownership, South-South

cooperation and supporting country capacity to implement global conventions on women's empowerment.

32. Building on the previous multi-year funding framework, the new strategy features specific yet interlinked outcomes adapted to local contexts. She described the development and management results frameworks, underscoring the responsibilities of UNIFEM to provide demand-driven policy advice and programming, strong coordination on gender equality throughout the United Nations reform process, accountability, risk management and oversight, and effective, efficient administrative, human and financial capacity and systems. She called for an increase in core contributions to enhance predictability and effective planning.

33. Some 34 delegations took the floor to pay tribute to the Executive Director's 12-year tenure at UNIFEM on the occasion of her final appearance before the Executive Board in that capacity, many praising the role and impact of UNIFEM in their own development initiatives. They underscored the crucial role of UNIFEM in the drive to achieve "one United Nations", in coordinating gender-based interventions across the United Nations system and in global achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, they noted that mainstreaming gender equality is the collective responsibility of all Member States and of the United Nations system as a whole. One delegation urged UNIFEM to scale up efforts to promote participation of men in women's empowerment initiatives.

34. Several delegations observed that while the draft strategic plan moves definitively toward sharper, more ambitious catalytic programming, gaps remain in its monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms. Delegations perceived a "crisis of implementation" and encouraged better harvesting of data and lessons learned to more seamlessly transform ideas into strategic action.

35. Reiterating the need for predictable funding, many delegations applauded the growing support for gender-related development activities, one delegation officially committing to increased support to UNIFEM. Some delegations, noting stagnation in UNIFEM core funding, asked how programming would be affected in the event of a shortfall in the projected core funding increase. One called attention to the challenge of service delivery in middle-income countries, where funding allocations might fail to adequately assess needs on the ground. Delegations called on Member States beyond the traditional largest donors to consolidate support.

36. Senior UNIFEM managers responded by detailing the ongoing efforts to harmonize operations with other United Nations organizations and to improve accountability, monitoring and evaluation. They assured members of their continued creativity in capturing lessons learned and in bolstering capacity at country level to scale up replication of good practices.

VI. UNDP country programmes and related matters

37. The Associate Administrator presented 22 draft country programmes for consideration by the Executive Board, from:

Africa region: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda and Togo.

Asia and the Pacific region: Fiji, Nepal and Samoa.

Arab States region: Kuwait and Somalia.

Latin America and the Caribbean region: Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua.

38. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2001/11 and 2006/36, the Executive Board approved the following country programme extensions on a no-objection basis: Bahrain, Bhutan, Bolivia, Cuba, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, India, Jordan, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and United Arab Emirates.

39. Among the votes of confidence and appreciation expressed by delegations for the draft regional programmes, several praised the consultative process which produced them. Many went on to draw attention to the particular resource mobilization challenges faced by middle-income countries. Others questioned whether UNDP was best placed to support economic development initiatives and urged UNDP to play to its strengths, such as advocacy and capacity development. Delegations urged UNDP to improve its effectiveness in partnering with local institutions and initiatives. One delegation recommended that UNDP strengthen interventions and coordination at local, district and village levels, and to ensure participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the development process.

40. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, presented a note by the Administrator on assistance to Myanmar. Summarizing the findings of a recent assessment of the Human Development Initiative in Myanmar, he illustrated, through examples of concrete results, how the initiative had met its mandate, and offered grounds for a three-year extension.

41. Delegations expressed support for the extension, some urging UNDP to redouble its efforts to ensure that its resources were appropriately targeted and applied according to the mandate of the initiative.

42. The Executive Board adopted decision 2007/36 on assistance to Myanmar.

VII. United Nations Office for Project Services

43. The Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), reported on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for 2004-2005.

44. Delegations expressed appreciation for the improvements in transparency and efficiency at UNOPS. One delegation called on UNOPS to address remaining gaps in internal risk control, maintenance of reserve and internal accounts.

45. Turning to the proposed transfer of direct procurement services for common-user items from the UNDP/Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) to UNOPS, delegates welcomed the proposal in the light of the associated strengthening of UNOPS as a central procurement resource, among other procurement resources, to the United Nations system.

46. The Executive Board adopted decision 2007/37 on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, 2004-2005, and decision 2007/38 on the proposed partial merger of certain functions of IAPSO with UNOPS.

VIII. United Nations Capital Development Fund

47. The Executive Director, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), presented a proposal on programme and funding arrangements for the Fund. He detailed progress in partnering with UNDP to integrate strategic planning and results frameworks through the UNDP strategic plan, establish programmes and mobilize resources jointly at country level, integrate reporting and evaluation policies, and rationalize management and operations. He called for more frequent consultations with donor Member States and with UNDP to increase core resources and stabilize the financial foundation of UNCDF.

48. Delegations praised efforts to harmonize with UNDP, and heralded the singular focus on least developed countries. Several delegations queried which alternatives UNCDF would adopt should it fail to meet its funding goal of \$25 million dollars: whether it would reduce the number of countries supported or the amount allocated to each country. In this regard, many called upon UNCDF to rule out the former option, some encouraging UNCDF to extend its services, albeit gradually, to all least developed countries. Some urged UNCDF to present the more detailed progress report on integration efforts with UNDP that had been planned for the current session. Many echoed the call for increased funding from UNDP, as well as for a more diversified base of donors and other funding sources. One delegation cautioned that UNCDF should refrain from becoming engaged with financial sector reform at the country level to an extent that would exceed its mandate.

49. In response, the Executive Director assured delegates that programming and funding arrangements with UNDP remain a top priority for UNCDF. He identified funding stability as the major challenge, and expressed appreciation for the widespread encouragement for UNDP to take the lead in increasing support. He stressed that UNCDF would seek to avoid reducing the number of countries assisted, a position reiterated by other senior fund managers. The Executive Director reminded delegates that creating enabling environments for microcredit through inclusive financial sector policies is one of the UNCDF practice areas. He closed by announcing his imminent departure from the UNCDF for personal reasons, which prompted tributes from the President and the Associate Administrator.

50. The Executive Board adopted decision 2007/34 on predictable programme financing for UNCDF.

UNFPA segment

IX. Statement by the Executive Director and financial, budgetary and administrative matters

51. The UNFPA segment opened with the statement of the Executive Director (available at <http://www.unfpa.org/exbrd>). The Executive Director stated that in a changing world, UNFPA was committed to change to better serve people in their quest for peace, security, human rights, and development. She underscored that nationally owned and led development was a fundamental guiding principle for UNFPA and the Fund's goal was to be a stronger field-focused organization that delivered stronger results in support of national development. She noted that the UNFPA strategic plan, 2008-2011, was designed to trigger local results. She

underscored that the organizational structure emphasized strengthening country offices to improve programme delivery. She noted the Fund's commitment to co-location and regional alignment with other United Nations organizations. She stated that UNFPA was strengthening its oversight capacity and training all staff on accountability, including risk management and fraud prevention. She informed the Executive Board about the Fund's accountability framework and noted that a draft oversight policy was being prepared.

52. She gave an overview of the Fund's financial situation and thanked the top 10 donors to UNFPA: Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Japan, Finland, Germany, Spain and Canada. She thanked the 43 countries that had increased their contributions in 2007. She deeply appreciated that support from the Executive Board members and the United Nations membership at large had enabled UNFPA to become stronger and more stable financially.

53. The Executive Director highlighted the recently launched initiatives that UNFPA was proud to participate in: the International Health Partnership of Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of Norway; the Norwegian-led Deliver Now for Women and Children initiative; the Canadian initiative to save a million lives; and the UNICEF and UNFPA initiative to reduce female genital mutilation. She noted that poor sexual and reproductive health was the leading killer of young women in developing countries and constituted a large share of the global burden of poor health and disease. Greater progress in saving women's lives depended in part on greater resources and towards that end UNFPA was creating a thematic trust fund to improve maternal health. She encouraged Member States to contribute to the fund and emphasized that *No woman should die giving life*.

54. The Executive Director stated that UNFPA would continue to focus on HIV prevention among women and young people, and on condom programming. A comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services and supplies underpinned achieving universal access to reproductive health, HIV prevention and attaining the health Millennium Development Goals. She underscored that advancing women's empowerment and gender equality was central to development, human rights, peace and security. She noted the important work under way to carry forward the TCPR. She stated that the quest for coherence provided unprecedented opportunities to integrate the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) into national plans and United Nations support to countries.

55. Delegations applauded the Executive Director's inspiring statement and expressed strong support for the mandate and work of UNFPA. They commended UNFPA and its staff for the commitment to advancing the ICPD agenda. They underscored that achieving the ICPD goals was essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. They appreciated the extensive, transparent and inclusive consultative process that UNFPA had engaged in with Member States in developing the strategic plan, 2008-2011, and the organizational structure. Several delegations underscored the importance of the Fund's work in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including HIV-prevention, especially among young people, and the eradication of gender-based violence. The strong inclusion of HIV/AIDS in the plan was considered extremely important, as well as the focus on combating female genital mutilation/cutting. They appreciated the priority given to

the human rights-based approach in the strategic plan and noted that it was important for UNFPA to build capacity at all levels to implement this. Delegations supported the organizational structure and its emphasis on strengthening country offices and country-level support. Two delegations regretted the change of location of one of the regional offices.

56. The Fund's commitment to implementing the TCPR was commended. Referring to the Delivering as One pilots, one delegation asked about the costs. One delegation asked for information on the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM). Several delegations expressed appreciation for UNFPA support and stated that they valued the Fund's work in their countries. A number of them indicated their interest in enhancing their partnership with UNFPA in such areas as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and youth. Some delegations expressed concern that progress on Millennium Development Goal 5, on improving maternal health, was lagging behind. One delegation noted that in addressing maternal health, there should be an emphasis on maternal mortality. Delegations noted the importance they attached to the Fund's work in humanitarian crises and mentioned that they would have liked additional information in the strategic plan on the cluster approach and the Fund's contribution to the ongoing humanitarian reform. Some delegations asked for further details about the Fund's partnership with other United Nations organizations, including in the area of gender.

57. Delegations were pleased to note the robust financial health of UNFPA reported in the Annual Financial Review, 2006. The delegation of Denmark announced that it would consider increasing its contribution to UNFPA by 50 million DKK upon the endorsement of the strategic plan. Several delegations commended UNFPA attention to accountability issues and expressed support for the Fund's plans to ensure robust audit, oversight and accountability arrangements. One delegation stated that the accountability systems should not be established at the expense of the independence and credibility of United Nations internal systems and the sovereignty of Member States.

58. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their support and comments. She thanked the European Commission for the increased contribution and also thanked Denmark for announcing a likely increase in its contribution. She appreciated the recognition by Executive Board members of the importance of the culturally sensitive approach, particularly in the community-level context. She emphasized that addressing maternal mortality was very high on the UNFPA agenda and the campaign to eradicate obstetric fistula was a part of that. She underscored the need to achieve the target of universal access to reproductive health by 2015. Regarding censuses, she noted that UNFPA was involved in several and was the lead agency for the censuses in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Sudan.

59. Concerning the issue of co-location, she noted that an important factor was that UNFPA bought services from UNDP and in the feasibility study it had been indicated that Almaty would be a subregional hub for UNDP and UNICEF. She assured the Board that no new bureaucratic layer would be created under the new organizational structure. Regarding the HLCM, she elaborated on the committees pertaining to human resource initiatives; financial management; and information and communication technology and knowledge sharing. Concerning the Delivering as One costs, she noted that the processes were very labour-intensive and required a heavy investment in terms of time and personnel.

60. She elaborated on the division of labour being worked out amongst the agencies regarding gender and stated that additionally, where UNIFEM was not present, UNFPA took on gender issues beyond reproductive health. She noted that UNFPA chaired the Inter-Agency Standing Committee task force on gender-based violence. Within specific global clusters UNFPA had coordination responsibility for the reproductive health sub-cluster within the Health cluster; for the sexual and gender-based violence sub-cluster under the Protection cluster; and for gender within the Early Recovery cluster. UNFPA had also been asked to take on coordination for improving age- and sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis for the cluster system as a whole. Regarding partnerships, she noted that the Fund's main collaborators included WHO, UNDP, UNICEF and UNIFEM.

61. The Director, Division for Management Services, in responding to a query noted that the 8 per cent growth in the biennial support costs as reflected in financial data over the past ten-year period was attributable to inflation, mandatory costs, security costs and local costs that were dollar-based and were impacted by currency movements. He stated that UNFPA was a small organization and had various fixed costs. Regarding the operational reserve, he clarified that UNFPA was neither freezing the operational reserve nor drawing down from it. Instead, UNFPA was proposing withholding \$11 million, which was the equivalent of 20 per cent growth in expected annual regular income for 2007 and 2008, to utilize those funds for the one-time cost of the organizational structure during the next biennium, 2008-2009; this should be regarded as an investment in the organization.

62. The Executive Board took note of the UNFPA annual financial review, 2006 (DP/FPA/2007/15).

X. UNFPA strategic plan and related matters

63. The Executive Director introduced the UNFPA strategic plan, 2008-2011: Accelerating progress and national ownership of the ICPD Programme of Action (DP/FPA/2007/17), as well as the other documents to be considered under the agenda item, namely: the global and regional programme (DP/FPA/2007/19); the UNFPA accountability framework (DP/FPA/2007/20); the review of the organizational structure (DP/FPA/2007/16 and corrigendum (DP/FPA/2007/16/Corr.1); and the review of the system for the allocation of UNFPA resources to country programmes (DP/FPA/2007/18).

64. Delegations appreciated the transparent and collaborative process followed in developing the strategic plan, 2008-2011. They recognized that the plan responded to the changing aid environment. Noting that the plan was concrete and well structured, they welcomed the three focus areas: population and development, reproductive health and rights and gender equality. They also welcomed the strategic plan's focus on national ownership, national leadership, capacity development, and South-South cooperation. Delegations underscored the positive difference that the work of UNFPA generated in the lives of women and youth. They recommended further refinement of baselines and indicators and emphasized robust monitoring of results. Some delegations hoped to see indicators to monitor reproductive health commodity security (RHCS) included in the results-based framework. Some delegations welcomed the emphasis on addressing the complications of unsafe abortion. One delegation sought clarification regarding

unsafe abortion. Delegations expressed concern that progress on Millennium Development Goal 5 on improving maternal health was lagging behind.

65. Delegations welcomed the Fund's culturally sensitive approach to programming and hoped that implementation of the strategic plan would be guided by it. It was noted that such cultural and local sensitivity was necessary to adequately measure and evaluate programme results. Delegations welcomed UNFPA support for the 2010 round of censuses and noted the importance of strengthening data collection and use, including data disaggregated by sex and age. Delegations expressed support for scenario 3 of the organizational structure and emphasized that the changes should improve efficiency and performance at country and regional levels. They requested a timetable with benchmarks for the roll out. The importance of accountability and transparency was emphasized.

66. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their constructive comments and support. Regarding the regionalization implementation, she assured the Executive Board that it would be a fair, open and phased process and noted that UNFPA had developed a human resources plan that included job matching and a job fair. She added that UNFPA would report back to the Board on progress. Regarding the query on abortion, she stated that UNFPA abided by paragraph 8.25 in the ICPD Programme of Action. She saluted the new Director-General of WHO and stated that WHO was an excellent partner with whom UNFPA collaborated on issues of common interest.

67. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) elaborated on UNFPA collaboration with UNAIDS. She noted that as an active co-sponsor of UNAIDS, UNFPA had a lead role in the following: comprehensive condom programming, vulnerable young people, and HIV and sex work. She assured delegations that to promote RHCS UNFPA was working with several partners, including national champions and NGOs.

68. The Chief, Strategic Planning Office, noted that UNFPA had developed a model for risk management and training was being provided to country offices. He stated that baselines for the strategic plan indicators would be established based on information obtained by the end of 2007 from the country office annual reports. Regarding reporting, he drew attention to annex 2 of the accountability framework document (DP/FPA/2007/20) and noted that comprehensive reports on the strategic plan implementation would be submitted in 2009 and 2011. Progress on implementation would also be provided in 2008 and 2010 through the Executive Director's annual reports. He emphasized that strengthening and harmonizing reporting to the Executive Board was very important. He noted that the strategic plan document included information on UNFPA partnerships at global, regional and country levels.

69. The Executive Board adopted the following decisions: 2007/40: UNFPA strategic plan, 2008-2011; 2007/41: UNFPA global and regional programme, 2008-2011; 2007/42: Review of the system for the allocation of UNFPA resources to country programmes; and 2007/43: Review of the organizational structure of UNFPA and the operational reserve.

70. Following the adoption of the decisions, the delegations of the United States of America and the Russian Federation provided explanations of position and requested that their statements be included in the record of the meeting (the

statements are contained in annex 2). The delegations of Sweden and Belarus also made statements.

XI. Country programmes and related matters

71. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) provided a broad overview of the draft country programmes under consideration by the Executive Board. A short film was shown illustrating UNFPA work in developing countries to support reproductive health commodity security.

72. The Directors of the Africa Division, Asia and the Pacific Division, the Latin America and the Caribbean Division and the Deputy Director of the Division for Arab States, Europe and Central Asia introduced the specific draft country programme documents from their regions.

73. In accordance with decision 2006/36, the Executive Board approved the following 15 country programmes, on a no-objection basis, without presentation or discussion: Cameroon, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Malawi, Mali, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, Jordan, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Bolivia and Cuba. These documents had been reviewed and discussed earlier at the Annual session in June 2007.

74. The Executive Board also reviewed and discussed the following 14 draft country programme documents for: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Togo, Somalia, Nepal, Pacific Island countries, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua; and the country programme extension for Venezuela.

75. During the discussion, numerous delegations emphasized that UNFPA was an important development partner. They underscored that a fruitful consultative process involving Government, UNFPA, civil society and other stakeholders had been followed in preparing the draft country programme documents. They appreciated that the draft country programmes were in line with the UNDAF, national plans and priorities, and national poverty reduction strategies. They commended UNFPA efforts focusing on reproductive health care, including HIV/AIDS; addressing maternal and infant mortality and gender-based violence; and emergency preparedness. They noted that strengthened coordination amongst agencies would help avoid duplication. Some delegations stated that the ultimate goal should be one consolidated country programme.

76. Specific comments made on the draft country programmes were noted by UNFPA and, in accordance with decision 2006/36, will be conveyed to the respective countries to take into account in finalizing the country programme documents. The UNFPA Directors responded to queries from delegations and observed that in the interest of time additional information would be provided bilaterally to the concerned delegations. It was noted that due to the current procedures of the Executive Boards of the different agencies it was not possible to submit one consolidated country programme.

77. The Executive Board took note of the following 14 draft country programme documents and the comments made thereon: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Togo, Somalia, Nepal,

Pacific Island countries, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua. The Board also took note of the country programme extension for Venezuela.

Joint UNDP/UNFPA segment

XII. Internal audit and oversight

78. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, and the Director, Division for Oversight Services (DOS), UNFPA, presented their respective oral reports (in response to decision 2007/29) on progress made in developing the components and principles of the oversight policy prior to its submission to the Executive Board in January 2008.

79. Delegates commended UNDP and UNFPA efforts and looked forward to further elaboration of their respective policies. They underscored the importance of accountability and transparency. They emphasized that all partners were accountable for delivering on the promises of the Millennium Development Goals. In noting that accountability should include a focus on the monitoring of performance and results, they stressed that accountability frameworks must be robust enough to respond to needs even in the most challenging parts of the world. Noting the importance of UNDP and UNFPA oversight services in providing assurance to the Executive Board, delegates underscored that donors sought assurance that their funding would reach the planned objectives. They reaffirmed the political neutrality and impartiality of UNDP and UNFPA and noted that a diversity of views should be preserved. Regarding financial disclosures by staff, one delegation asked to whom the information was disclosed and how the system worked.

80. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, acknowledged the importance of regarding oversight as but one dimension of broader accountability efforts. He suggested informal consultations over the coming months to shape the role of the proposed audit advisory committee.

81. The Director, DOS, UNFPA, thanked the delegations for their support and encouragement. Regarding the financial disclosures by staff, he clarified that all UNFPA staff holding the rank of D-1 and above, plus all UNFPA Representatives and all procurement staff were required to make financial disclosures. The disclosures were made online and the custodian of the information was the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (External Relations, United Nations Affairs and Management).

XIII. Follow-up to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board meeting

82. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, and the Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP, made a joint presentation on UNDP and UNFPA implementation of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) recommendations.

83. Delegations appreciated the joint presentation and were pleased with the results of the review of progress in implementing the Global Task Team (GTT) recommendations. They encouraged further efforts to optimize joint programming

and were interested in institutional incentives to encourage joint work at country level. They noted that UNAIDS could serve as a model to others in delivery. They stressed the importance of the division of labour as agreed among the UNAIDS cosponsors and emphasized the need to avoid duplication. Delegations underscored that the linkages between sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and HIV/AIDS were critical for preventing the spread of the pandemic. They encouraged UNDP and UNFPA to invest in prevention activities addressing boys and girls, as well as the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. They hoped that the organizations would act upon the UNAIDS gender guidelines, once finalized, and work to ensure gender equality and equity in national HIV responses.

84. Delegations urged renewed focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups and on addressing the stigma and discrimination surrounding AIDS. They encouraged further efforts to strengthen analysis of the impact of HIV/AIDS on poverty and vulnerability to inform the development of national planning frameworks and poverty reduction strategies. They stressed the need to ensure that targets for different initiatives such as those of the United Nations, the Global Fund and bilaterally supported programmes were harmonized with country targets for universal access. They encouraged the agencies, funds and programmes to use the UNAIDS unified budget and work plan as the accountability tool for all HIV/AIDS activities.

85. The Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA, thanked the delegations for their constructive comments and assured the Executive Board that UNFPA was committed to implementing the GTT recommendations and was undertaking close follow-up. She noted that the follow-up action plan would be reviewed next week in Geneva at the UNAIDS meeting of global coordinators representing all UNAIDS cosponsors and adjustments would be made as needed. Referring to the ongoing discussions on the division of labour among UNAIDS cosponsors, she observed that the division of labour would respond to the respective country situation and factors such as country presence and capacities of each cosponsor on the ground. Noting that the nearly 100 HIV/AIDS experts recruited by UNFPA to provide support in country offices were having a very positive impact, she provided an illustrative example of the joint programme in Kenya, as well as examples from Thailand and Indonesia. She stated that UNFPA would provide additional examples at future Executive Board sessions. She underscored that linkages between HIV/AIDS and reproductive health programming were increasingly evident.

86. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP, confirmed that HIV/AIDS-related interventions are not a sector unto themselves, but are mainstreamed to cut broadly across all practices. He acknowledged the ongoing challenges posed by stigma and discrimination surrounding AIDS.

87. The Executive Board took note of the joint Report on the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (DP/2007/50-DP/FPA/2007/22).

XIV. Field visits

88. The team leader of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board field visit to Mexico (29 April to 5 May 2007) introduced the report of the field visit (DP/2007/CRP.3-DP/FPA/2007/CRP.2). He thanked the Government of Mexico and the staff of UNDP and UNFPA for a very educational and enjoyable field visit. He highlighted the recommendations contained in the report and noted that Mexico provided a useful paradigm for United Nations engagement with middle-income countries. The delegation of Mexico expressed its Government's appreciation for the Executive Board's field visit and emphasized that UNDP and UNFPA had an important role to play in Mexico and other middle income countries. The delegation underscored that Mexico attached great importance to South-South cooperation.

89. The Executive Board took note of the report of the field visit to Mexico.

XV. Other matters

90. Presenting a proposed amendment to the instrument for the establishment of the restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF), a senior manager of the GEF declared that the amendment would be effective upon adoption by the implementing agency.

91. The Executive Board adopted decision 2007/39 on the amendment to the instrument for the establishment for a restructured GEF.

92. The Executive Board agreed to a new procedure whereby the Director of the Evaluation Office would be appointed in consultation with the Executive Board, and agreed to suggest reappointing the current Director for a second four-year term.

Informal meetings

93. UNDP held informal consultations on the preliminary drafts of the UNDP and UNIFEM biennial support budgets.

94. UNFPA held an informal consultation on the preliminary draft of the UNFPA biennial support budget.

Annex 1

Item 9: UNFPA strategic plan and related matters

U.S. Explanation of Position

Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to express our gratitude to our colleagues on the Executive Board for their hard work during the course of this week, and would like to offer the following Explanation of Position on the decisions on Items 9 (a) and (b) before us.

The International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action expresses important political goals that the United States endorses. We accept the goals and objectives of the ICPD Program of Action and its Key Actions for further implementation based on the understanding that, while these documents constitute an important policy framework, they do not create international rights or legally binding obligations on states under international law.

Our reaffirmation of the goals and objectives of these documents does not constitute a change in the position of the United States with respect to treaties we have not ratified.

The United States further understands that references to reproductive health and all associated terms do not create any new international human rights and cannot be interpreted to constitute support, endorsement, or promotion of abortion.

It is our understanding that nothing in the Strategic Plan or in the Global and Regional Programme authorizes UNFPA to engage in advocacy relating to abortion legalization; such advocacy would be inappropriate for a UN agency which states that it is neutral on the issue. Additionally, regarding references to "unsafe abortion" in these and other UNFPA documents, it is our understanding that UNFPA follows the ICPD guidelines, which define "unsafe abortion" as a procedure for terminating an unwanted pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards, or both.

We request that this Explanation of Position be included for the record in the report of this meeting.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Russian Federation Explanation of Position

Mr. Chairman,

Russia has consistently supported the strengthening of country and regional components of the work of UNFPA.

It is our understanding that the decision "Review of the organizational structure of the UNFPA" adopted at the session under agenda item 9 will enable the process of regionalization in all the regions, including the establishment of a subregional office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

At the same time, we believe that gradual implementation of the Fund's structural reorganization will allow for the reconsideration of the proposal regarding

the location of the regional bureau for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which should later result in a decision that meets the interests of the programme countries of the region.

We believe that the decision on the location of the regional bureau should be based on current realities and should, first of all, contribute to the improvement of the UNFPA effectiveness in the region. Taking into account the objective of co-location, the process is likely to require the involvement of other operational agencies, first of all, UNDP and UNICEF.

Mr. Chairman,

We expect extensive and timely consultations with interested delegations on the issue.

We kindly request our statement to be included in the official records of the session.

Annex 2

Statements made by delegations on the adoption of decision 2007/32 during the resumed second regular session, 5 October 2007

1. Pakistan, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

Mr. President, Mr. Associate Administrator, Distinguished Delegates, I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China after the adoption of decision on the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the President for his remarkable leadership and perseverance through a difficult process. I would also like to thank the Administrator for his commitment and dedication as conveyed by the Associate Administrator today. We wish to thank the distinguished facilitators, Mr. Tesfa Seyoum of Eritrea and Ms. Tarja Fernandez of Finland, for the manner in which they coordinated the negotiations of one of the most difficult draft decisions. We also wish to thank our partners for the constructive spirit that prevailed throughout the negotiations. We trust that the Board will be able to apply the same constructive approach to the future steps related to continual improvement of the strategic plan.

Mr. President, we have joined consensus on an important decision of the UNDP strategic plan with hope that the plan will be continually improved in the light of the provisions of this decision. We welcome the Administrator's commitment to issue an updated version of the strategic plan at the first regular session of the Executive Board in January 2008. We believe that this decision will be an integral part of the strategic plan, 2008-2011 and provide guidelines.

While reaffirming the importance of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review, the G-77 and China appreciates the agreement about the need to improve the strategic plan in the light of the General Assembly resolution on the TCPR, particularly in the chapters on coordination, democratic governance, capacity development, and crisis prevention and recovery. We believe that TCPR precedes the UNDP strategic plan, and thus the implementation of the strategic plan should be based on the understanding and agreement reached in the TCPR. On the same line, we stress that UNDP should base its work on the concepts and approaches which are intergovernmentally agreed and consistent with the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits.

With the adoption of this decision, we wish to stress and expect that the UNDP will fully respect the United Nations Charter principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the States. We reiterate that the strength of the United Nations operational system lies in its legitimacy, at the country level, as a neutral, objective and trusted partner for both recipient countries and donor countries.

The G-77 and China fully appreciates the importance of promotion of human rights, particularly the right to development for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions. However, while stressing the need for UNDP to strictly adhere to its mandate, we reaffirm that UNDP has neither any normative, operational or

monitoring role, nor any competence with regard to human rights. We would like to register our views that UNDP leadership should be impartial in discharging its mandate by carefully avoiding any politically charged influence.

We reiterate that UNDP should focus on supporting national priorities rather than trying to set or establish them. We would assess the effectiveness of UNDP through its contribution in assisting programme countries in the achievement of their national development plans and strategies.

Mr. President, we want to reaffirm that funding for development activities should not be tied to any conditionalities, or earmarked for certain focus areas only. Instead, it should be allocated according to the respective national priorities and plans of programme countries.

We call for practical adherence to the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system which are, *inter alia*, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of recipient countries in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities are carried out for the benefit of recipient countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development. We reiterate that the overarching principle of United Nations operational activities is national ownership and leadership of the process, its products and results by the programme countries.

Mr. President, the Group of 77 and China trusts that UNDP will adhere to the letter and spirit of this decision. Let me assure that we attach great importance to the work of UNDP and its strategic plan. We encourage UNDP to continue to keep the Member States informed while preparing the updated version of the strategic plan.

We request that this statement reflecting our position be included verbatim in the report of the session.

2. United States of America

In joining consensus on this decision, the United States would like to make three specific points:

The first concerns the UNDP role in upholding United Nations norms and standards, including those related to human rights. Respect for human rights has been enshrined in numerous international conventions and agreements since the founding of the United Nations, and must remain fundamental to UNDP activities. As the document we have just adopted makes clear, our heads of state and government resolved at the World Summit in 2005 "to support the further mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system". In that connection, let me add that UNDP must continue to implement the important outcomes of recent international summits and conferences: good governance, popular participation, and private sector development.

The second point concerns the use of "national execution" as a programme implementation modality. While we support it as a means of building national capacities, we recognize the urgent need to address the associated risks and weaknesses that the auditors have found. In this regard, the decision calls on UNDP

to foster "responsible financial management of operational activities". This must include addressing issues related to "national execution" in a transparent and accountable way to both programme countries and the Board.

The third and final point is on the role of UNDP in monitoring the Millennium Development Goals. The 2000 United Nations Millennium Declaration articulated the Goals and the 2005 World Summit Outcome reaffirmed them. The United States supports them. The so-called "MDG-8", however, cannot be found in either of these two Summit documents, or any other United Nations inter-governmental agreement. UNDP, therefore, cannot have a role in monitoring something that does not exist.

3. Eritrea, on behalf of the facilitators of agenda item 3

Mr. President, what a glorious 5 October 2007, and on a Friday! The Facilitators — Tarja Fernández of Finland and I — believe that history in a small measure has been made at this Board session this morning by the adoption of the long-awaited decision on the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011. We averted a major crisis within UNDP which would have immensely affected the lives of our peoples that we, representatives in the Board, respectively serve. And we owe it to you, our distinguished President, who led us through and stepped in at that critical moment of the difficult negotiation process when invited. Congratulations are in order, Sir, for this extraordinary success.

We also owe it to the delegations and their fine diplomats who demonstrated great patience and flexibility in the process. We certainly owe it to the chief negotiators, Farhat Ayesha of Pakistan and Natasha Smith of Australia, and their able associates, Ruchi Ghanashyam of India and Thomas Gass of Switzerland, who diligently and faithfully served their respective constituencies. "Touch negotiators", I must say. We saw them at their best, and Tarja and I wish to thank them all for their constructive engagement and for their understanding of what was at stake.

And how can we forget Jane Haycock of the United Kingdom, who voluntarily showed up at every negotiation session, day or night, with her nice laptop, and captured the agreed changes in the draft decision on the spot, as the negotiations went along. She made life easy for us. Thank you, Jane, for your generous service.

We owe it further to the secretariat of UNDP, particularly the Bureau of Strategic Partnerships headed by Bruce Jenks. His dedicated team of professionals and the Executive Board secretariat stood ready at any time, all the time, to help us when help was needed.

Mr. President, indeed, this was, if not the most, admittedly one of the most difficult negotiation processes. Tarja and I are very happy that it is over. I am sure you all are too. I have personally facilitated many decisions of all sorts in this Board over the years, but I have not come across as difficult as this. But we all knew from the beginning that it was going to be difficult, and understandably so.

Did all sides get what they wanted? Definitely not. Didn't we share that golden rule with you at the start of the process to warn you what it would look like? The timeless wisdom that says, "In politics and diplomacy, you don't get what you deserve; you get what you negotiate", has proven to be true again, and it always will be. The bottom line is, Mr. President, we got what all of us can accept and cherish. And that is the true meaning of partnership. It is not *US* and *THEM* or vice versa. It

is *WE*, and what we can do together. This morning, we got what is good for the peoples that we serve. And that is what matters. Our peoples! "Ultimately, it is through serving others that we become fully human", Marsha Sinetar once said. Therefore, diplomats at this Board, rejoice for serving your people.

4. Cuba

Mr. Chairman, our delegation joins the statement of Pakistan on behalf of the G-77 and China, while at the same time we would like to make some comments regarding the UNDP strategic plan and the decision adopted today.

For more than three decades, Cuba has had a close and fruitful relationship of cooperation with UNDP, always acknowledging this Programme's important work, as well as its valuable contribution to development in our country.

We have always regarded UNDP as an important cooperation programme in matters of resource mobilization, transfer of technology, scientific and technologic capacity-building, through concrete projects of precise sectoral or national impact that contribute to economic and social development. We commend UNDP's work in this regard.

It is based on this very direction that our country wishes to continue to preserve UNDP's action, and not on a strategic vision which aims to give priority to activities that are increasingly less linked to the true economic and social development of our peoples, and to turn this programme into a supranational tool that attempts against its very character as a development programme.

This has been our approach throughout the process of drafting and adoption of this first strategic plan. Thus, we are not completely satisfied with the decision.

We recognize that as a result of the intense negotiation process certain balance has been achieved, in establishing the decision that the current strategic plan will be amended by the Board in January 2008 to finally consider important concerns of developing countries. We are fully confident in the UNDP Administrator's commitment to present an updated version of this plan, incorporating the provisions of the adopted decision. It would be further advisable to take into consideration the outcome of the TCPR that we will negotiate in the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

However, the decision, the strategic plan itself and its annexes continue to have instances of high concern for our delegation, which we would like to set down, faced with the current process and for future frameworks and intergovernmental forums where Cuba participates and this issue is addressed again.

In this regard, we think the purported priority given to such issues as civic engagement and human rights, including issues related to paragraph 15 of the decision, *inter alia*, are not appropriate, for these are not the direct competence of UNDP. These are issues to be addressed by the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, which are accountable for and have a clear mandate to such effects, as for example the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

As the realization of human rights is a principle requiring universal treatment, Cuba opposes the attempt to turn the 134 offices of UNDP in the field, into human rights watchdog bodies; under the cooperation programmes and projects.

international cooperation in this important matter should be carried out through the bodies and agencies of universal scope that have been appointed to that end. We are concerned at the partial and discriminatory character in the approach to this issue that is tried to be carried forward through UNDP. This approach attempts against the States' national sovereignty.

Likewise, we consider that UNDP must try to avoid implementing elements that are not universally accepted and applicable as operational principles, as well as concepts, such as "inclusive human development and inclusive growth" that are neither defined nor accepted yet within the United Nations system.

Let us seize this opportunity to commend Mr. Kemal Dervis's work at the helm of UNDP. We are certain that, through his bright leadership, he has contributed to the good relations of cooperation between Cuba and UNDP.

In this context, we reiterate our satisfaction for the adoption of UNDP's country programme 2008-2012 for Cuba, which falls within the context of UNDAF signed between our country and the agencies, funds and programmes, which is a telling case of coordination, mutual respect and planning, and lays the foundations of all cooperation actions to be carried out in Cuba during that period.

Practice has proven the impossibility and inevitability of establishing single development patterns. Therefore, operational activities shall first and foremost answer to the national strategies and development priority of each country and respect the mandates given by the Member States.

Respect for the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the States, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, are general principles that must continue to guide operational activities anywhere in the world, for the key to success lies in their strict observance.

5. France, also on behalf of Germany, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland

This statement is made on behalf of Germany, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and France.

We wish first to thank the various participants who have brought about the successful conclusion of negotiations on this strategic plan, foremost among them the Danish presidency, which spared no effort in achieving this goal.

We are pleased with the conclusion of these negotiations, which reflects the shared responsibility we all feel in ensuring that UNDP has the resources necessary to function.

In this regard, we encourage UNDP to pursue its efforts towards ensuring greater coherence in the operational activities of the United Nations, improving efficiency, and strengthening its accountability policy.

We are pleased to see that the misunderstandings related to the human rights-based approach have been clarified, grounded as they are in internationally agreed principles, and taking into account the links between respect for human rights and development, and between respect for human rights and economic growth in efforts towards poverty reduction.

We have no doubt that UNDP will continue to work towards these ends as it has always done, and that it will regain the confidence of its various partners with respect to this important matter.

6. Egypt

Mr. Chairman, I would like to express my delegation's thanks and appreciation for your efforts and the efforts exerted by all parties to reach the adoption of the UNDP strategic plan. I take the floor to associate my delegation with the statement of the distinguished representative of Pakistan on behalf of the G-77 and China, and to state the following:

(a) Egypt is not a member of the Board while this strategic plan has been adopted.

(b) Our views with regard to the content of the strategic plan have been made clear and conveyed to the Administrator, the Associate administrator, and to the Board several times, either through the G-77 and China or directly to them.

(c) The relationship between governments and civil society is the exclusive competence of the national governments of program countries.

(d) National ownership remains the overarching principle that governs how operational activities are carried out.

(e) The human rights-based approach in programming is not part of UNDP's mandate, and it does not have any normative, operational or monitoring competence with regard to human rights.

(f) Egypt will implement what the Egyptian Government signs with UNDP, as a framework which determines the role and responsibilities of the programme and the Resident Coordinator in Egypt.

7. Italy

Mr. President, Italy would like to thank the two facilitators, Tarja Fernandez and Tesfa Seyoum, as well as the President of this Board for the work done in leading us to the approval of the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011.

Italy supports the UNDP strategic plan based on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

Italy also supports the UNDP focus on human development, including by further mainstreaming human rights throughout the United Nations, and looks forward to the discussion of the accountability framework at the first regular session 2008 of the Executive Board.

8. Benin

The African group, a member of the Executive Board, hereby associates itself with the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The African group, as a member of the Board, wishes simply to place UNDP on alert: Never again. Never again should we have to endure such a drama. To avoid it, UNDP must listen to programme countries.

Certainly, resource mobilization is important. But what use is access to resources if they are not oriented toward development? The answer to that question should lead UNDP to demonstrate humility and to cultivate the virtue of listening.

In closing, we wish to thank the President of the Board for his engagement and his passion. I do not overlook the facilitators, in particular our colleague Tesfa, of whom the group is proud, as he served as the representative of the African group.

I thank all those who, near or far, contributed to the adoption by consensus of this decision.

9. Sweden

First and foremost, I would like to commend you Mr. President for your competent leadership and thank you, your team and facilitators for your tremendous efforts at the meeting of the Executive Board, and in the ensuing weeks to reach an agreement on a strategic plan.

There are many parts of the strategy that we entirely embrace and we would once again like to give credit to UNDP for progress made.

While recognizing the difficult context, including the DPRK issue and current United Nations reform processes in which UNDP has been operating this past year, Sweden is not entirely satisfied regarding the process leading up to this session. We have heard self-critical remarks in this regard from the secretariat and hope that these will lead to constructive improvements for our future deliberations.

At the Executive Board meeting, we expressed our concern regarding the lack of attention to human rights in the draft strategic plan. Following extended negotiations, the result is, in our mind, not satisfactory.

It is regrettable that there is no consensus in this Board regarding the role of UNDP in mainstreaming and promoting human rights in the United Nations system.

It is also regrettable that there seems to be a misunderstanding about what a human rights-based approach to programming is all about: that it is not about political conditionality, but a tool for effectively supporting countries to achieve human development.

Sweden will carefully analyse the implications of this decision. The UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011, will be the basis for our partnership with UNDP throughout the period.

Finally, Mr President, it is evident to my delegation that UNDP has, and should continue to have, a key role in improving operational effectiveness and promoting United Nations values and coherence at the country level. In this regard, we look forward with optimism to engaging with other United Nations Member States this autumn and beyond to move important reforms forward.

10. Norway

Norway welcomes the endorsement of UNDP's strategic plan. Failure to do so would have been detrimental to the organization and could have caused serious damage to the organization's credibility. There are issues that we believe are not adequately covered in the strategic plan, but there needs to be a compromise, and that is what we have achieved. We do acknowledge that the document is an improvement on the previous MYFF in terms of focus and strategic direction.

The decision today is of utmost importance as it signals our confidence in the organization and the importance of the work that UNDP does. We will encourage an ongoing dialogue between UNDP and the Member States on implementation of the strategic plan to avoid questions of confidence in the future.

While we are pleased that a solution has been found, many questions are yet to be resolved. We regret that, due to the process that has taken place, Norway is not in a position to increase core funding to UNDP next year nor provide multi-year pledges since there are some key areas of importance that remain open for revision until the annual session 2008.

As stated previously, we regret that the issue of human rights-based approach to programming has become politicized and reiterate our position that UNDP's proposals in this regard were a reflection of General Assembly mandates to mainstream human rights in the work of all United Nations agencies. We look forward to continuing an open dialogue on these issues and to gain insights from what is already going on at programming level.

Norway welcomes the efforts and good spirit that allowed for an agreement on the strategic plan. We are now looking ahead and trust that this spirit of cooperation also will guide us in Member States' deliberation on the upcoming TCPR so that we together will ensure a stronger United Nations that delivers more and delivers better.

11. Netherlands

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Also we would like to commend you on a job well done, and also the facilitators of the resolution.

We also welcome the decision by the Board to approve the strategic plan. As the Associate Administrator already said, it was on all sides a give and take. Also from our side our positions on the strategic plan and on the issues which are important to us are well known, and I think it is also well known that we have viewed the strategic plan differently. But as I said, it's a give and take, and we welcome the approval by the Board of the strategic plan.

We look forward to constructive consultations in the next few months to update the strategic plan in the light of the decision we have taken today. For us, it is important that the spirit of compromise and cooperation in the Board has prevailed. That is in the interest of UNDP, but especially in the interest of the poor that the organization serves and that we all serve.

We hope that this spirit of cooperation and compromise will continue, because in the next few months there are important issues ahead of us, not just in the board in its further consultations, but also in the General Assembly, and we hope that we

can continue in this spirit to overcome our differences and to reach solutions on important issues in front of us.

12. Germany

Germany welcomes the decision on the consensus regarding the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011 that enables UNDP to continue to work, and we also welcome the forward-looking spirit with which the adoption of the updated plan has been made possible.

We thank the Danish presidency as well as the facilitators for their untiring efforts — for their leadership, patience and perseverance.

We fully align ourselves with the statement made by France and would like to add some concrete remarks:

It remains our position that UNDP as a United Nations organization MUST uphold norms and standards agreed to by its Member States, including those related to human rights. We accepted paragraph 16 [of the decision] with the understanding that UNDP will continue to work in accordance with the aforementioned standards, based on its long tradition as a responsible United Nations organization.

Similarly, we have accepted paragraph 21 with the understanding that this paragraph does not justify the suspension of fundamental human rights norms by any member state.

Another point concerns the “principle of equitable geographical representation” which we accepted with the understanding that it is without prejudice to Article 101, paragraph 3 of the United Nations Charter.

Further, I would like to stress that we uphold our position that no Millennium Development Goal should be singled out.

Lastly, in our view, the character of the strategic plan as a “living document” only justifies adjustments to the plan in concordance with paragraph 3 (b) of the adopted decision.